

4. Asea/'Ασέα

A. Testimonia

i. Ancient

Strabon vii.343

ῥεῖ δὲ [ὁ Ἀλφειὸς] ἐκ τῶν αὐτῶν τόπων, ἐξ ὧν καὶ ὁ Εὐρώτας
καλεῖται δὲ Ἀσέα.

"It [the Alpheios] flows from the same regions as the Eurotas, that is from
a place called Asea."

Pausanias viii.27,3

πόλεις δὲ τοσαύδε ἦσαν ὁπόσας ὑπὸ τε προθυμίας καὶ διὰ τὸ ἔχθος τὸ
Λακεδαιμονίων πατρίδας σφίσιν οὐσας ἐκλιπεῖν ἐπείθοντο οἱ
Ἀρκάδες Ἀλέα, Παλλάντιον, Εὐταία, Σουμάτειον, Ἀσέα, Περαιθεῖς,
Ἑλισσών, Ὀρεσθάσιον, Δίπαια, Λύκοιαι· ταύτας μὲν ἐκ Μοινάλου

"The following were the cities which the Arkadians were persuaded to
abandon through their zeal and because of their hatred of the
Lakedaimonians, in spite of the fact that these cities were their homes:
Alcea, Pallantion, Eutaia, Soumateion, Asea, Peraitheis, Helisson,
Oresthasion, Dipaia, Lykaia; these were cities of Mainalos."

B. The Site (fig. 9)

i. Identification

The site of Asea has been identified since the time of Gell (1817)
and today no controversy surrounds its location. The ancient town
occupied the ground on and around the natural hill situated in the
territory of the modern village of *Káto Aséa*. Eric Holmberg (1944)
published an analysis of his excavations there, from which he concluded
that the city of Asea continued to maintain an independent existence of
its own as a town well beyond Epaminondas' attempt to build
Megalopolis, by amalgamating forty nearby Arkadian towns. In
accordance with the pottery found at the site he concluded that after the
beginning of settlement in Neolithic times there occurred two gaps in the

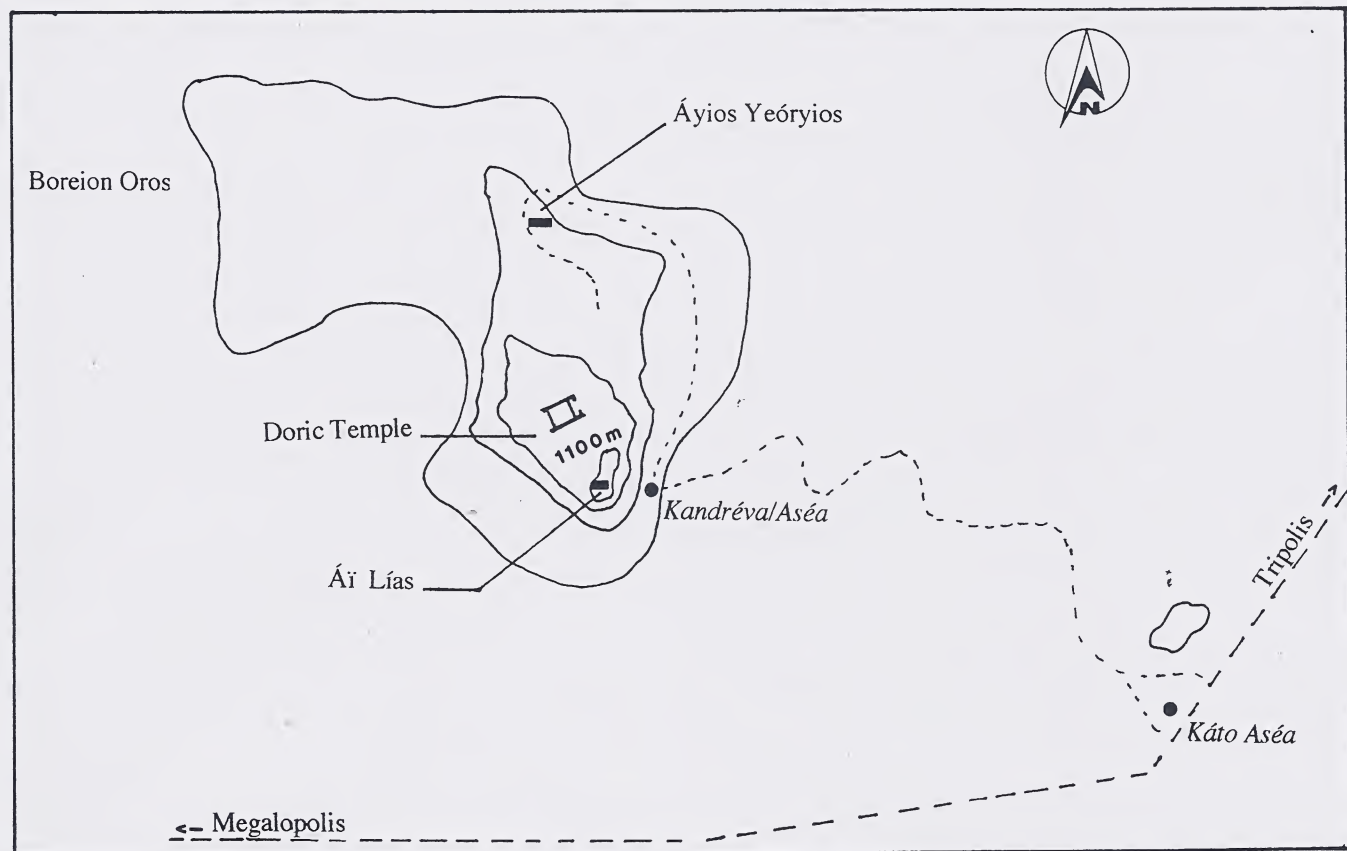


Fig. 9. Boreion Oros-Asea.

long use of of the hill: the Archaic and Roman periods.

Apart from the archaeological evidence for the chronological limits of the site's occupation, as produced by the excavations of Holmberg, several facts relating to its spatial extent may be deduced from the topographical evaluation of the area. The sources are explicit in their indications of the importance of Asea in classical antiquity and a consideration of the size of the excavated hill can only lead to the logical conclusion that it did not have the surface area to contain such a large and important urban centre as that of Asea. This suggests that the area proper of habitation in time of peace must have extended either well below the hill, or on higher ground toward Boreion Oros, to the North. In fact we are now able to suggest, having at our disposal a topographical knowledge of the entire plain of Asea that the hill in question was nothing more than the Akropolis of Ancient Asea and not the site of the entire town. It is probable that the Asean community reached almost to the top of Boreion Oros to the North, while it most certainly circled the defensive walls of the hill in the plain. The abundance of burial remains discovered by the local inhabitants in the area between the peak of Boreion Oros and the hill of the akropolis in the plain, along with traces of water pipes in the vicinity of the chapel of Áyios Nikólaos clearly support our conclusions about the limits of the site.

ii. Remains

a) Hill of Ancient Asea / Káto Aséa

Eric Holmberg excavated parts of the wall around the hill as well as the top area. Two public buildings - one on top of the hill which Holmberg considered to have been a temple - possibly of Hellenistic date, as well as private houses also of Hellenistic date can be seen today. Bronze artifacts, coins, and oil lamps probably of Hellenistic date were also found.

Pottery: Neolithic, extensive EH(Mess), MH(Holm), LH(Bleg), PG, Geometric, Hellenistic.

b) Áyios Nikólaos, village of Aséa (formerly Kántreva).

Water pipes and worked blocks with marble pieces can be seen in the area South and West of the homonymous hill. A cistern (?) was uncovered by the locals immediately to the South East of the chapel of

Áyios Nikólaos. On the lower part of the North West slopes of the same hill a burial site has been known by the locals for some time as is shown by the illicit digging evident in that area.

Pottery: LH(Bleg), Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman.

A. Testimonia

i. Ancient

Xenophón, Hellenika vi.5,12

ὁ δὲ Ἀγεσίλαος, ἐπεὶ ἐγένετο αὐτῷ τὰ διαβατήρια, εὐθὺς ἐχώρει ἐπὶ τὴν Ἀρκαδίαν. καὶ καταλαβὼν πόλιν ὁμορον οὖσαν Εὐταΐαν, καὶ εὐρῶν ἐκεῖ τοὺς μὲν πρεσβυτέρους καὶ τὰς γυναῖκας καὶ τοὺς παῖδας οἰκοῦντας ἐν ταῖς οἰκίαις... καὶ ἐπωκοδόμει δὲ τὸ τεῖχος αὐτῶν.

"Agesialaos, when his sacrifices at the frontier proved favourable, immediately proceeded to march against Arkadia. And having occupied Eutaia, a city on the border, where he found the older men, the women, and the children living in their homes... and he repaired the city wall."

Xenophon, Hellenika vi.5,20

ὁ δὲ Ἀγησίλαος καὶ μάλα βουλόμενος ἀπάγειν τὸ στράτευμα, καὶ γὰρ ἦν μέσος χειμῶν, ὅμως ἐκεῖ κατέμεινε τρεῖς ἡμέρας, οὐ πολὺ ἀπέχων τῆς Μαντινέων πόλεως, ὅπως μὴ δοκοίη φοβούμενος σπεύδειν τὴν ἄφοδον. τῇ δὲ τετάρτῃ πρῶ ἀριστοποιησάμενος ἀπῆγεν ὡς στρατοπεδευσάμενος ἔνθα περ τὸ πρῶτον ἀπὸ τῆς Εὐταΐας ἐξώρμητο. ἐπεὶ δὲ οὐδεὶς ἐφαίνετο τῶν Ἀρκάδων, ἦγε τὴν τάχιστην εἰς τὴν Εὐταΐαν...

"Agesilaos, even though he wanted to lead back his army - because it was the middle of winter - he nevertheless remained there for three days, not far from the city of the Mantineians, so that he would not appear to be in a hurry to depart out of fear. Early on the fourth day he began to march home, with the apparent intention of camping at the place where he had originally done so on his departure from Eutaia. However, since none of the Arkadians appeared, he continued in haste his march to Eutaia..."

Stephanos of Byzantion, s.v. Εὐταΐα

Εὐταΐα, πόλις Ἀρκαδίας, τὸ ἐθνικὸν Εὐταΐεύς.

"Eutaia, an Arkadian town, the nationality being called Eutaieus."

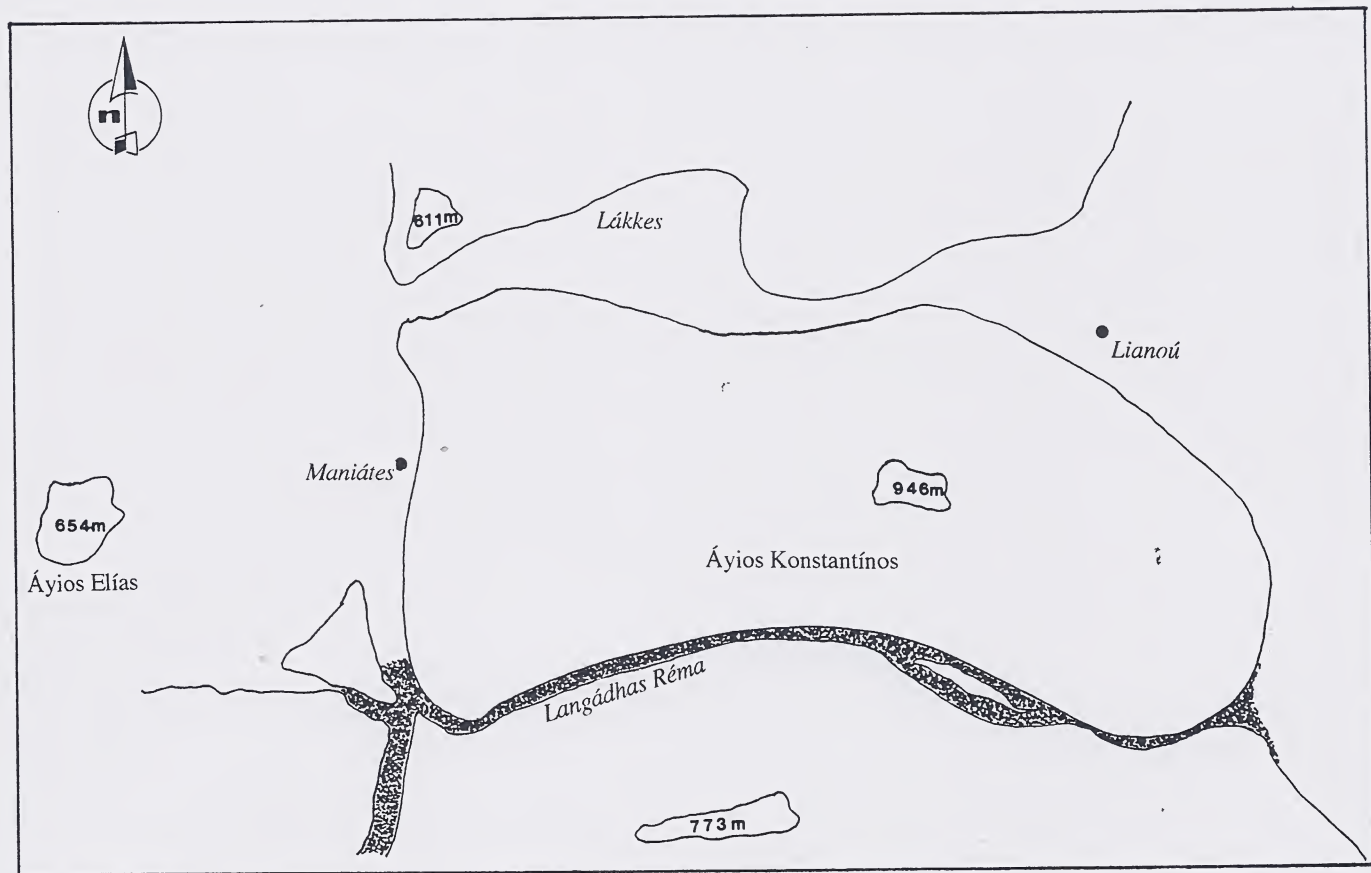


Fig. 10. The Site of Eutaia.

πόλεις δὲ τοσαύδε ἦσαν ὅποσας ὑπὸ τε προθυμίας καὶ διὰ τὸ ἔχθος τὸ
Λακεδαιμονίων πατρίδας σφίσιν οὐσας ἐκλιπεῖν ἐπείθοντο οἱ
Ἀρκάδες· Ἀλέα, Παλλάντιον, Εὐταία, Σουμάτειον, Ἀσέα, Περαιθεῖς,
Ἑλισσών, Ὀρεσθάσιον, Δίπαια, Λύκαια· ταύτας μὲν ἐκ Μαινάλου

"The following were the cities which the Arkadians were persuaded to abandon through their zeal and because of their hatred of the Lakedaimonians, in spite of the fact that these cities were their homes: Alea, Pallantion, Eutaia, Soumateion, Asea, Peraitheis, Helisson, Oresthasion, Dipaia, Lykaia; these were cities of Mainalos."

ii. Modern

LEAKE, 1846: 31,33, placed it at *Ambeláki*.

LORING, 1895: 50, placed it at *Liánou*.

BURSIAN, 1872: 229, placed it at *Liánou*.

HITZIG-BLUMNER, 1907: 1, 207 placed it at *Piána*.

FRAZER, 1913: 394, simply follows LORING.

PRITCHETT, 1982: 54, placed it at *Liánou*.

PIKOULAS, 1988: 70, placed it at *Liánou*.

B. The Site (fig. 10)

The site of Eutaia occupied, it seems, a vast area. The Western limit may be placed in the vicinity of the church of Ayía Varvára, while the Easternmost limit must lie on the last slopes in the direction of Mount *Áyios Konstandínos* which rises immediately South of the village of *Liánou* (Pl. 9.1-9.2). On the summit of the mountain Loring noticed traces of fortification walls, which may still be seen today descending both of the more approachable sides of the mountain. It seems that the Southern slopes of the mountain were considered unapproachable on foot and so were not fortified. Loring reported ruins of a small chapel on the peak of the mountain, but the remains there suggest as more probable the existence of a signal tower or at least a guard post; a chapel is to be found, however, lower down. Agesilaos' fortification of Eutaia is well known, and we are obliged to consider the possibility that these wall remains are those which were built in haste in 370 B.C. The question is not, however, easily decided since there is a noticeable absence of pottery from that period in the vicinity. The wall itself seems rather

irresponsibly built, a fact which perhaps accounts for its poor condition today. A positive identification of the wall as the fortifications constructed by Agesilaos might be thought to raise the possibility that the peak of *Áyios Konstandínos* was in fact the akropolis of the community of Eutaia. This could not, however, be the case primarily because of the long and strenuous climb the population would have had to endure before entering safe ground. With that consideration in mind we can conclude that the permanent fortification of Eutaia had to be located at a much lower level on the Northern slopes of *Óros Áyios Konstandínos*.

ii. Remains

Marble pieces and Roman coins in the possession of the inhabitants and an abundance of architectural remains around the church of Ayía Varvára (which, according to Loring, was built in marble as well - although today it has been reconstructed) can be seen.

Pottery: EH(Mess), MH(Holm), LH(Bleg), Arch(Pik), Classical, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine.

6.
Pegai / Πηγαί

A. Testimonia

i. Ancient

Pausanias viii.44,3

Σταδίους δὲ ὅσον πέντε ἀπὸ Ἀσέας, τοῦ Ἀλφειοῦ μὲν ὀλίγον ἀπὸ τῆς ὁδοῦ, τοῦ δὲ Εὐρώτα παρ' αὐτὴν ἐστὶν ἡ πηγὴ τὴν ὁδὸν πρὸς τε τοῦ Ἀλφειοῦ τῇ πηγῇ ναός τε Μητρὸς Θεῶν ἐστὶν οὐκ ἔχων ὄροφον καὶ λέοντες λίθου δύο πεποιημένοι.

"Some five stades from Asea are the sources of the Alpheios and the Eurotas, the former a little distance from the road, the latter just by the road itself. Near the sources of the Alpheios are a temple of the Mother of the Gods without a roof, and two lions made of stone."

Strabon viii.3,12

ρεῖ δ' ἐκ τῶν αὐτῶν τόπων, ἐξ ὧν καὶ ὁ Εὐρώτας καλεῖται δὲ Ἀσέα,

"it [the Alpheios] flows from the same regions as the Eurotas, that is, from a place called Asea."

Hesychios, *Lexikon*

Λεόντειος πόρος ὁ Ἀλφειὸς καθότι ἐπὶ ταῖς πηγαῖς αὐτοῦ λεόντων εἴδωλα ἀφίδρυται

Alpheios is considered the lion's crossing on account of the fact that at its sources have been placed statues of lions.

ii. Modern

Many scholars in the last two centuries have been unanimous in locating the source of the Eurotas at *Megále Vρύσι* and that of the Alpheios at *Phrankónvryso*:

GELL, 1817: 97, 137.

BOBLAYE, 1836: 173.

LEAKE, 1830: 84, II 46,; 1846 36-43.

BURSIAN, 1872: 187, 227.
EXPEDITION, 1838: 404.
HITZIG-BLUMNER, 1907: 1, 279.
LORING, 1895: 33.
FRAZER, 1913: 415-417.
ΠΙΚΟΥΛΑΣ, 1988: 57, 58.

Some have discussed a possible temple near by:

BURSIAN, 1872: 227.
CURTIUS, 1852: 260.
FRAZER, 1913: 417, 41 viii.

B. The Site

i. Identification

There is a great possibility that Arkadia was the home of a cult of Rhea. From Pausanias (viii.8,2) we learn that, according to the Arkadians, Rhea gave birth to Poseidon in Arkadia and even named a spring after her son in the region of Tegea. The proposal of the Greek philosopher Khryssippos (3rd century B.C.) who suggested that ῥέα may derive from ῥέω (= to flow) is in direct agreement with the traditional theme associating Rhea with natural springs.

In Methydriion, at a distance of one hundred and seventy stades from Megalopolis (Pausanias viii.35,5), where Orkhomenos built his city (viii.36,2), stood a temple of "Horse Poseidon". Here at Oros Thaumasion, Rhea deceived Kronos; for this reason a cave dedicated to her existed near the mountain-top, (Pausanias viii.36,3).

A story recorded by both Pausanias (viii.8,2; viii.41,2) and Strabon (viii.3,22), not only lays the foundation for the hypothesis of a local Arkadian worship of Rhea, but draws a clear connection between that goddess and springs. It is possible that such a cult existed in the Plain of Asea, at the site of the Πηγαι.

Pausanias (viii.44,3) records the existence of a temple dedicated to the "Mother of the Gods" (Μητρὸς Θεῶν), toward (πρὸς) the source of the Alpheios River. As he had visited the source of the Eurotas River first, we must assume that this temple was located at some point between the two sources, perhaps a little closer to that of the Alpheios. According to

Pausanias the temple had no roof, and statues of lions stood on its grounds, a fact also recorded by Hesykhios in his *Lexikon*.

It is probable that Pausanias came across a temple dedicated to Kybele. The comment he made on the lions points in that direction. The same site prior to the arrival of Kybele's worship in Greece, is likely to have been dedicated to Rhea, not only because of her associations with this part of Greece but also given the frequent replacement of her cult by that of Kybele (Appolodoros iii.5,1; Strabon x.3,12-13; Stephanos of Byzantion s.v. Μόστονυρα).

ii. Remains

In 1868, a statue was discovered near the ruins of what might have been a hostel of the 18th century, in the immediate area of the so called *Phrankóvryso*. The artifact portrayed a sitting female subject, the head being lost. On the lower part on what seems to be its base appeared the inscription: Α Γ Ε Μ Ω. The statue was transported and deposited at the National Archaeological Museum (Koumanóudhes, 1874: 480-485, pl.71A; Romaíos, 1957: 163).

In 1986, a second statue was discovered to the right of the modern *Aséa-Megalópolis* road, by a crew of the public works department. Apparently the crew delayed the announcement of its discovery in an attempt to dispose of the artifact illegally. Local inhabitants, however, as well as an off-duty policeman, became aware of the event and the statue was carried to the museum at *Trípolis* by the archaeological authorities. The statue portrays a female subject in a sitting position; the head is missing. A published account of the artifact has not yet been produced.

Romaíos connected the ΑΓΕΜΩ inscription to known surnames of Artemis while suggesting that the statue in question is that of the Mother of the Gods. Romaíos' deduction is, of course, in agreement with Pausanias' report of a temple in the vicinity dedicated to the Mother of the Gods. Until a careful examination of the second statue is published we cannot deduce much on its place of origin for it may not have been found where it originally stood.

Recent Bibliography:

PRITCHETT, 1982: 62, n.80.

JOST, 1985: 417, n.8.

ΠΙΚΟΠΑΣ 1988: 58

A. Testimonia

i. Ancient

Pausanias viii.44

ἔστι δὲ ἄνοδος ἐξ Ἀσέας ἐς τὸ ὄρος τὸ Βόρειον καλούμενον, καὶ ἐπὶ τῇ ἄκρᾳ τοῦ ὄρους σημεῖα ἐστὶν ἱεροῦ· ποιῆσα δὲ τὸ ἱερὸν Ἀθηνᾶ τε Σωτείρᾳ καὶ Ποσειδῶνι Ὀδυσσεύς ἐλέγετο ἀνακομισθέντα ἐξ Ἰλίου.

"From Asca is an ascent up Mount Voreion and on the top of the mountain are traces of a sanctuary. It is said that the sanctuary was built in honour of Athena Soteira and Poseidon by Odysseus after his return from Troy."

ii. Modern

LORING, 1895: 33-4, identifies Mount *Ágios Ilías* as Voreion.

HOLMBERG, 1941: identifies the same mountain as Voreion.

ROMAÍOS, 1911: 274 ff., places the site at the low pass of *Vígla*.

ROMAÍOS, 1957: 136, 143, where he introduces his theory of both temples being Ascan, and both having been dedicated to Athena Soteira - ποιῆσα δὲ τὸ ἱερὸν Ἀθηνᾶ τε Σωτείρᾳ καὶ Ποσειδῶνι Ὀδυσσεύς ἐλέγετο ἀνακομισθέντα ἐξ Ἰλίου (Pausanias viii.44,4)] the older being that on the *Vígla* pass.

ΠΙΚΟΥΛΑΣ, 1988: 61, and note 170, contributes no new information, while he accepts the estimates of those who place Voreion Oros at the low pass of *Vígla*.

JOST, 1973: 253 identifies the temple on the top of mount *Ágios Ilías* as that of Πάνας (Pausanias 36.4,7).

DRAKÓPOULOS, 1992: *Ágios Ilías* as Voreion Oros.

For the Byzantine church built on the ancient temple of Voreion Oros see: Velissariou, 1981: 8-9.

B. The Site

i. Identification

The topographical evaluation of the area has shown us that Pausanias' Βόρειον Ὄρος was the mountain of *Áyios Ilías*, directly above the modern village of *Aséa* (formerly *Kántreva*), immediately to the North of the Asean akropolis. The Doric temple which rests on its summit (Pl. 10.1) exactly corresponds to the words of Pausanias "ἐπὶ τῇ ἄκρᾳ τοῦ ὄρους σημειῖα ἔστιν ἱεροῦ". The mountain is approximately 1100m high and is approachable from the South by climbing due North from ancient Asea. It is precisely as Pausanias described it, an "ἄνοδος ἐξ Ἀσέας".

It is logical to assume that Pausanias was looking directly at Asea from the "Pegai" when he spoke of ἄνοδος ἐξ Ἀσέας. That alone can convince us that he was describing *Óros Áyios Ilías* and not the low pass at *Vígla* which is certainly nowhere near an ἄκρᾳ τοῦ ὄρους. Besides the fact that *Óros Áyios Ilías* is the only mass of land situated directly to the North of the "Pegai" and so can justifiably be called Βόρειον, when one pays attention to the folklore of the region the connection to Poseidon becomes more than apparent. In the *Odysseia* (xi 118 and xiii 271) we read how Teireisias advises Odysseus to find a place where the sea is not known by carrying an oar on his shoulder to that region where the locals will call it a shovel, and there raise a temple to Poseidon. The story is similar to that of St. Elías, whose name the mountain bears today (Pl. 10.2). Tradition, we know, calls Odysseus the founder of the Poseidon worship in Arkadia and especially in Mantinea.

On the worship of Athena Soteira and of Poseidon in the immediate area (Pausanias viii.30,4 and viii.47,1) several things may be said. In the vicinity of Asea a tradition must have flourished which honoured Poseidon and Athena Soteira. We may also assume that all three temples, that of *Vígla*, that of *Áyios Ilías* and that of the *Pigái*, are part of the same tradition. The temple by the Alpheios-Eurotas source (Pegai) must have been of an older deity, more at home with the mountainous region, that of Gaia or Rhea. The goddess of the earth may have joined Poseidon in a common worship some time in the 6th or middle of the 5th century. The new name this deity might then have taken may be correlated to other instances such as Pausanias v.3,2 and viii.23,3, for transformations of Athena and Artemis respectively.

As a final note we should mention the extraordinary similarity between two sites of religious importance in Arkadia: that of *Óros Thaumásion* on the *Methýdrion* where Pausanias (viii.36.3) reports a πρὸς τῇ κορυφῇ τοῦ ὄρους σπήλαιον τῆς Πέρας, and that of Voreion Oros / *Áyios Ilías* in Asea where right below the temple and only a few meters from the remains of the peristyle of the naos, there exists a cave of small but well defined proportions, spacious enough perhaps to welcome offerings to a khthonian goddess.

ii. Remains

The Doric temple (Pl. 11.1-11.2) has an East-West orientation, its Western portion resting directly on the bed rock of the mountain. The stereobate consists of euthynteria and krepidoma. Of the krepidoma on the East side and South East corners only one step has been preserved, on the South side two, on the West and North sides three. Holmberg (1941) believed that the krepidoma had a fourth step. The rectangle formed by the euthynteria measures 15.23 x 32.45m. The temple must have been peripteral. According to Holmberg the type of connecting clamps used (T shape) indicates a date of some time before 350 B.C., while the four steps of the krepidoma suggest a date around 400 B.C. The form of a capital found and the termination of a discovered triglyph suggest 500 B.C. Marble parts of the temple may today be seen in the nearby villages and in the chapel of *Áyios Yeóryios* immediately below the temple.

Pottery: Classical and Hellenistic.